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ABSTRACT

This study used the cohort method to determine the status of students who participated in the high school Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (AIDP) Program in 1985-86, one year later as of June 30, 1987. Among the findings are the following: (1) 41.3 percent had dropped out of school; (2) 7.2 percent had graduated or passed a General Educational Development (GED) test; (3) 7.5 percent had been discharged from the school system either to local private schools or to schools outside of New York City; (4) 39.7 percent were still enrolled in school; (5) 4.3 percent were of unknown status either because of data-entry errors or because no official admission/discharge transactions had been recorded for them; (6) 49.5 percent of students who met AIDP's attendance eligibility criteria, but only 30.5 percent of those who did not meet the criteria, had dropped out of school; and (7) 58.7 percent of a comparison group of non-participants, but only 10.5 percent of the rest of the school, were listed as dropouts. Appendices provide additional data. Data are presented on seven tables and figures. (BJV)

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HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAM: ONE-YEAR FOLLOW-UP ON THE STATUS OF 1985-1986 PARTICIPANTS

OEA Evaluation Report

Evaluation Section Report
John E. Schoener, Senior Manager

October, 1988

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAM: ONE-YEAR FOLLOW-UP ON THE STATUS OF 1985-1986 PARTICIPANTS

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HIGHLIGHTS

INTRODUCTION

This study used the cohort method to determine the status of students who participated in the high school Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention Program in 1985-86 -- one year later as of June 30, 1987.

MAJOR FINDINGS

According to these data:

- 41.3 percent had dropped out of school.
- 7.2 percent had graduated or received G.E.D.
- 7.5 percent had been discharged from the school system either to local private schools or to schools outside of New York City.
- 39.7 percent were still enrolled in school, and
- 4.3 percent were of unknown status either because of data-entry errors or because no official admission/discharge transactions had been recorded for them.

OUTCOMES BY GROUP

To place the outcomes of A.I.D.P. students into an appropriate context, O.E.A. divided A.I.D.P. participants into two groups (A.I.D.P. attendance-eligible, A.I.D.P.-other eligible) based on whether or not they met the program's attendance eligibility criteria. A comparison group of non-participants (comparison students) from the same schools who met the attendance selection criteria but were not in the program, selected to represent the proportion of A.I.D.P. students in each grade was also selected. Data are also presented for non-participants from A.I.D.P. schools who did not meet the attendance selection criteria (rest of school.)

According to these data:

- 49.5 percent of A.I.D.P. attendance-eligible students but only 30.5 percent of A.I.D.P. other-eligible students had dropped out of school.
- 58.4 percent of the comparison group but only 10.5 percent of the rest of the school were listed as dropouts.

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I. INTRODUCTION

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (A.I.D.P.) program is a state-funded program of instruction, guidance, attendance, and health services for those students in New York City's public middle, high-and special-education schools most at-risk of dropping out of school. It is designed to increase the attendance, achievement, and promotion rate of these at-risk students and to decrease their dropout rate. The program was piloted in New York City high schools in 1984-85, and implemented in its present form in 1985-86.* This is a follow-up report on students who participated in the high school A.I.D.P. program in 1985-86, the first year the program was implemented in its present form.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The program's evaluation objectives for 1985-86 were as follows:

- a minimum of 50 percent of the students provided with A.I.D.P. services would have 1985-86 attendance that is better than in 1984-85;
- a minimum of 50 percent of the students who failed one or more subjects the previous year would pass at least one more subject in 1985-86 than in 1984-85;

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*The final evaluation reports of the high school A.I.D.P. program for the 1984-85, 1985-86, and 1986-87 school years are available from the Office of Educational Assessment.

- a minimum of 50 percent of students would be promoted to the next highest grade at the end of the 1985-86 school year; and

- starting with 1985-86 as a baseline year, a minimum of 50 percent of the students, ninth grade or below, would still be in school three years later.

The program's first three objectives, in attendance, achievement, and promotion, were not met in 1985-86. Overall 39 percent of the students improved their attendance from the previous year and 43 percent passed a higher percentage of courses during the program year. Only 14 percent of ninth grade students were promoted to the next grade at the end of 1985-86. Measurement of the fourth objective will be deferred until 1988-89, when the three years stipulated in the objectives have passed.

SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

An important goal of the A.I.D.P. program is to keep students in school and help them progress toward successful completion of high school. Accordingly, this report follows up on all students participating in the 1985-86 high school A.I.D.P. program and examines their status one year later -- as of June 30, 1987. Methodology is presented in Chapter II followed by a presentation of students' status one year later in Chapter III. Conclusions are found in Chapter IV. School-by-school breakdowns of data are presented in appendices.

II. METHODOLOGY

DEFINING THE GROUPS

A.I.D.P. Participants

The Office of Educational Assessment (O.E.A.) categorized 1985-86 high school A.I.D.P. participants into two groups based on whether or not they met the program's attendance eligibility criteria of 40 days absent during the previous school year or 20 days absent the previous term. Students meeting the attendance criteria were labeled as "attendance eligible" students. Those who did not meet the attendance selection criteria but were selected for program participation on some other basis were classified as "other eligible" students. O.E.A. found that these distinctions led to meaningful differences in outcomes in its 1986-87 evaluation of the A.I.D.P. program.

Comparative Groups

To place the outcomes of A.I.D.P. students into an appropriate context, O.E.A. identified a comparison group of non-participants ("comparison" students) from the same schools. These students met the A.I.D.P. attendance selection criteria but were not in the program. In addition the comparison group is proportionate in grade level to the A.I.D.P. groups. Thus the comparison group represents students in the same grades as A.I.D.P. students with similar attendance but who were not served. Data are also presented for non-participants from

A.I.D.P. schools who did not meet the attendance selection criteria ("rest of school"). Thus the follow-up study looked at four groups of students: A.I.D.P. attendance-eligible, A.I.D.P. other-eligible, comparison students, and the rest of the school.

DEFINITION OF OUTCOMES

Similarly to the procedure followed in The Cohort Report,* O.E.A. defined five possible outcomes, and assigned every student who participated in the high school A.I.D.P. program in 1985-86 to one of the following categories:

- Dropouts: students who have been discharged from the school system and who left without enrolling in some other educational program that leads either to a high school diploma or prepares the student for the Test of General Educational Development (G.E.D.), leading to a high school equivalency diploma. This is the definition employed by the State Education Department in calculating dropout rates and is also employed in O.E.A.'s cohort and annual dropout reports.

- Graduates and Other School Completers: students who have received either a high school diploma, G.E.D., or special education certificate.

- Transfers or Students Leaving the School System: students who left the system to enroll in another educational program. This includes students who entered local private schools, left New York City altogether, or entered a non-Board of Education G.E.D. preparation program. Students who died before completing high school are also counted in this category.

- Students Still Enrolled in the School System: students who were still on register as of June 30, 1987.

- Unknown Status: students whose admissions and/or discharges have not been recorded due to either data entry errors, or delays in data reporting or entry. The status of these students will be clarified in future reports.

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*"The Cohort Report: Four-Year Results for the Class of 1987 and an Update on the class of 1986" (June, 1988) is available from the Office of Educational Assessment.

THE DATABASE

The information about students' educational status that forms the basis of this report came from the computerized records compiled and maintained by the Office of Educational Data Services (O.E.D.S.). O.E.D.S. maintains information on each student in the New York City school system in a database known as the Biofile. Since student records are never deleted, even when they leave the school system, the Biofile holds a complete history of each student's passage through the school system.

Amassing and maintaining a computerized record-keeping system for more than one million New York City students -- past and present -- is a monumental task. Data-entry errors are inevitable, as are lags between the arrival of data at O.E.D.S. and their entry into the database. Working within these constraints, O.E.A. has used Biofile data to draw a picture of the status of 1985-86 high school A.I.D.P. students that is as accurate and complete as possible.

III. STATUS OF A.I.D.P. PARTICIPANTS AND NON-PARTICIPANTS

OVERVIEW

In 1985-86, 5,835 students took part in the high school A.I.D.P. program. Sixty-two percent of the students were ninth graders, 34 percent were tenth graders; the remaining four percent were eleventh or twelfth graders.* Eighty-five percent had failed at least three courses the year prior to their participation in the program; 56 percent were overage for their grade; 47 percent were reading at least two years below grade level; four percent were limited English proficient (LEP); and about two percent were special education students.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Figure 1 illustrates the following overall findings for 1985-86 A.I.D.P. participants at the end of the 1986-87 school year (school-by-school findings are presented in the appendices):

- 41.3 percent had dropped out of school.
- 7.2 percent had graduated or received a G.E.D.
- 7.5 percent had been discharged from the school system either to local private schools or to schools outside New York City.
- 39.7 percent were still enrolled in school.

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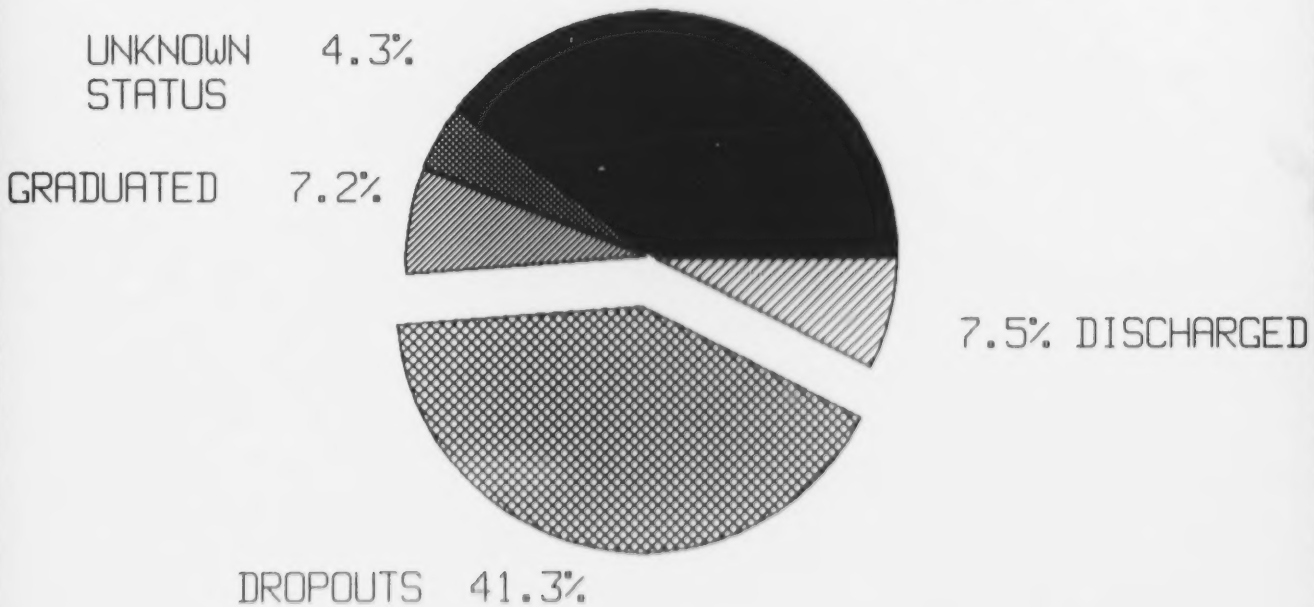
*The corresponding grade percentages for comparison group students are as follows: 58 percent ninth graders, 35 percent tenth graders, six percent eleventh graders and one percent twelfth graders.

FIGURE 1
STATUS OF 1985-86 A.I.D.P. PARTICIPANTS
AS OF JUNE 30, 1987



- 4.3 percent were of unknown status, either because of data-entry errors or because no official admission/discharge transactions had been recorded for them.

These statistics represent the status of A.I.D.P. participants at a particular point in time, and are accurate for that point in time. However, the status of some participants will change as students who were, for example, listed as dropouts return and complete a G.E.D. and their status is updated on the Biofile. Consequently, outcomes will vary slightly depending upon the time which outcomes are examined.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE OUTCOMES

Dropouts

A total of 41.3 percent of students who took part in A.I.D.P. in 1985-86 had dropped out of school by June 30,1987. The average age of A.I.D.P. students during the year they dropped out of school was 18.1 (S.D.=1.3) for attendance-eligible students and 17.7 (S.D. = 1.1) for other-eligible students.

Table 1 presents reasons for dropping out as defined by O.E.D.S dropout categories. As shown in this table, about four-fifths of the dropouts fell into the "Other -- Over 17, Not Included in Any Other Category" classification. This trend held for both groups of A.I.D.P. students and is similar to the pattern observed in The Dropout Report. As in that report, and substantiated by these data, we have the least information about the largest group of dropouts.

Table 1

A.I.D.P. Students'
Reasons for Dropping Out
(N= 2,548)

Reasons for Dropping Out	Group: Attendance Eligible %	Group: Other Eligible %	Combined %
Obtained Employment Certificate	2	2	2
Admitted to Business or Trade School	2	2	2
Not Found	2	3	2
Enrolled in Auxilary Services for the High Schools*	3	5	4
Enrolled in an Outreach Center*	3	3	3
Enrolled in a New York City Public Evening High School to Continue Work Toward High School Diploma*	1	2	1
Enrolled in Job Corps or Other Similar Vocational Training Program	3	3	3
Entered Military Service	1	--**	1
Other--Over 17, Not Included in Any Categories Above	83	80	82
Total	100	100	100

* Without confirmed admission to this program.

** Indicates less than one percent.

- We have the least data about the largest group of dropouts "Other--Over 17, Not Included in any Categories Above."

School Completers

Nearly eight percent (7.2) of 1985-86 participants completed their high school education by June 30, 1987. This rate of school completion is noteworthy considering that only four percent of A.I.D.P. students were in the eleventh or twelfth grades in 1985-86 and thus would be expected to finish school during the 1986-87 school year.

Transfers Out

Over the 1986-87 school year 7.5 percent of the 1985-86 A.I.D.P. participants were discharged from the school system as other than dropouts. "Discharged" encompasses a range of reasons for leaving the school system. Table 2 presents a breakdown of this group into various discharge categories. The largest category, "moved from New York City," is used by O.E.D.S. when a student's discharge is confirmed by the accepting school outside the boundaries of New York City. A similar confirmation is required for students enrolled in full-time high school equivalency programs. The percentage of students listed in each discharge category is generally similar except that attendance-eligible students (41 percent) are somewhat move likely than other-eligible students (32 percent) to be enrolled in a non-Board of Education high school equivalency program. This probably represents a programmatic difference whereby program staff direct students to an alternative educational setting when they appear to be making little progress. This trend makes sense given that attendance-eligible students have been shown to be

Table 2

Reasons for A.I.D.P. Student Transfer
and other Non-Dropout Discharges
(N = 462)

Reason	Group: Attendance Eligible %	Group: Other Eligible %	Combined %
Admitted to Parochial School	1	2	2
Admitted to Private School	6	4	5
In Institution (Non-Board of Education)	3	4	3
Moved from New York City*	45	58	51
Deceased	2	0	1
Home Instruction (Board of Education)	1	--**	--**
Over 21 years old	1	0	--**
Enrolled in a Full-time High School Equivalency Program/other than in Auxiliary Services or Outreach Centers)	41	32	38
Total	100	100	100

*Confirmed admission to another school outside N.Y.C.

**Represents Less than one percent.

***Confirmed admission to program.

- o Attendance-eligible students (41 percent) were somewhat more likely than other-eligible students (32 percent) to be enrolled in a full-time high school equivalency program.

more at-risk in terms of attendance than other-eligible students.

Students who Remain Enrolled

These are the students who neither completed school, nor left the system in the year following their participation in the A.I.D.P. program. Since the majority of A.I.D.P. participants were in the ninth and tenth grades in 1985-86, they would be expected to be enrolled in school during 1986-87. We will continue to monitor their progress in future updates.

To determine whether A.I.D.P. students were still actively enrolled during the 1986-87 we looked at their attendance records. Table 3 illustrates the number of days students were absent during the 1986-87 school year. Only 16 percent of attendance-eligible but 22 percent of other-eligible students were absent 20 or fewer days in 1986-87. An additional 25 percent of the students from both groups were absent between 21 and 40 days. Thus over one-half of students were absent more than 40 days the year following their participation in the program.

Unknown Status

A total of 265 students (4.3 percent) were of unknown status at the end of June, 1987. These students were listed as enrolled, but the Biofile did not contain the information that would allow assessment of their school status. As schools and O.E.D.S. make corrections to the Biofile and its related subsystems, we expect to be able to identify outcomes for many of

Table 3

Attendance of A.I.D.P. Students Still Enrolled
in the New York City School System
on June 30, 1987
(N = 1,961)

Number of Days absent[a]	Group: Attendance Eligible %	Group: Other Eligible %	Combined
0 - 20	16	22	19
21 - 40	25	25	25
41 - 60	21	16	18
61 - 80	14	13	14
81 -100	9	7	9
101-120	7	7	7
121-140	4	5	4
141-162	3	4	4
Total[b]	99	99	100

[a] The number of days absent does not include June because O.E.D.S. does not collect June attendance.

[b] Percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

- Over one-half of the students from both groups were absent more than 40 days during the year following their participation in the program.

these students.

OUTCOMES BY GROUP

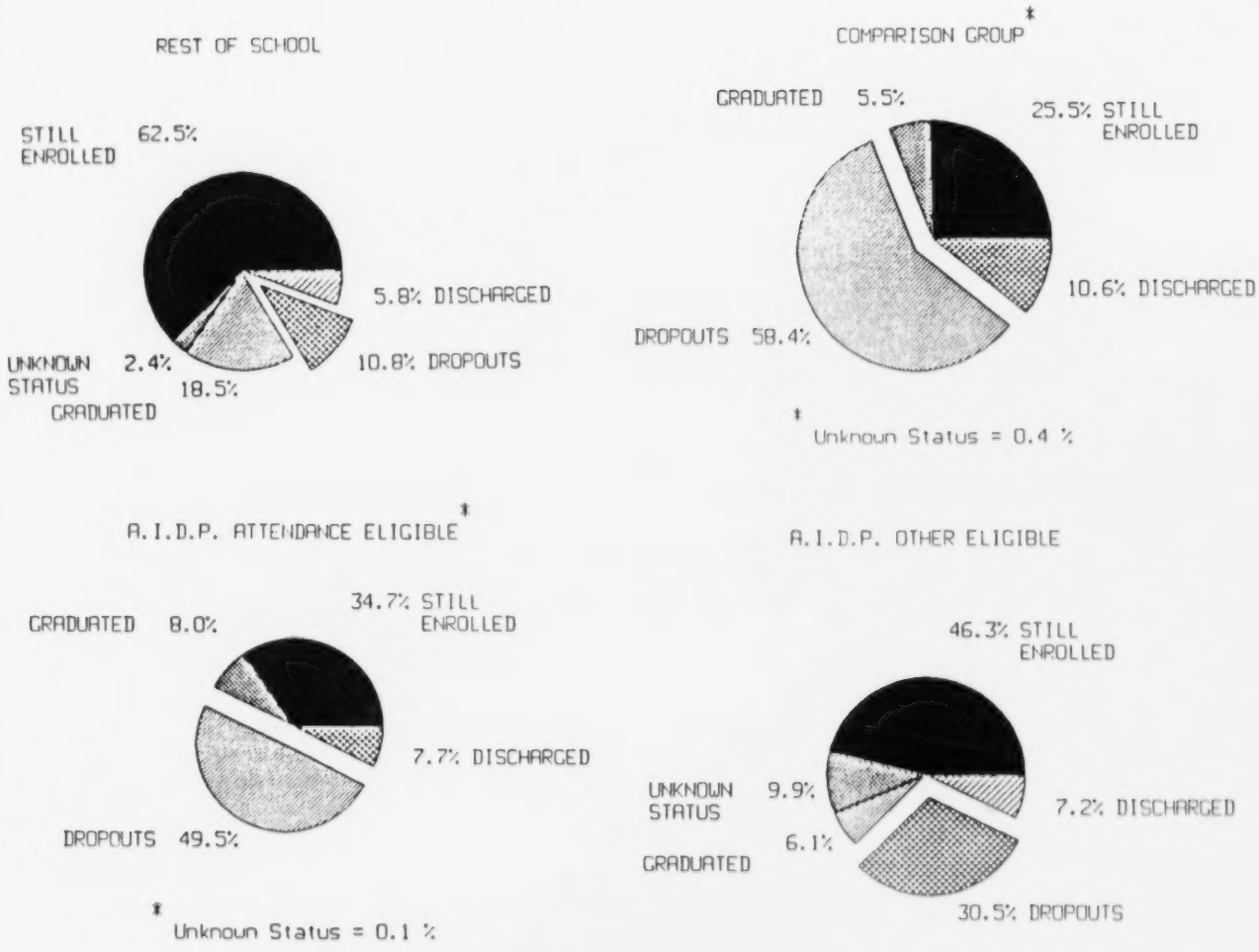
Figure 2 illustrates the June 30, 1987 status of four groups of students: A.I.D.P. attendance-eligible; other-eligible; comparison students; and the rest of the school. Examining the two figures representing A.I.D.P. students indicates that attendance-eligible students dropped out of school (49.5 percent) at a much higher rate than other-eligible students (30.5 percent). However, the percentage who graduated was slightly higher among attendance-eligible students (8.0 percent) than among other-eligible students (6.1 percent).

Comparing both A.I.D.P. groups to a non-treated comparison group shows some interesting patterns. Comparison students dropped out (58.4 percent) of school at a higher rate than the A.I.D.P. participants. This finding is partially accounted for by the fact that fewer comparison group students (25.5 percent) were still enrolled in school as of June 30, 1987 than were A.I.D.P attendance-eligible (34.7 percent) or A.I.D.P. other-eligible (46.3 percent) students.

The pattern evidenced by all these "at-risk" groups differs from that of the "rest of the school" in which the majority of students are still enrolled (62.5 percent) or had graduated (18.5 percent).

FIGURE 2

STATUS OF 1985-86 A.I.D.P. PARTICIPANTS AND COMPARATIVE GROUPS
AS OF JUNE 30, 1987



IV. CONCLUSIONS

One year after students had participated in the 1985-86 high school A.I.D.P. program, over two-fifths (41.3 percent) were officially listed as dropouts. In addition, students participating in the program because of poor attendance dropped out at a higher rate (49.5 percent) than students chosen for the program on other bases (30.5 percent). These findings call into question the program's efficacy in reducing the dropout rate. However, considerably more students (58.4 percent) from an untreated comparison group dropped out than A.I.D.P. participants. This finding suggests that the program may indeed have a positive impact on some students. School-by-school dropout rates showed great variability ranging from 23.0 percent at George Wingate to 56.6 percent at DeWitt Clinton High School.

Both the differences in dropout rates among the groups of A.I.D.P. participants and the comparison group and the variability in dropout rates by school suggest that further in-depth study is needed to better understand the impact of the program on at-risk students.

APPENDIX A

OUTCOMES FOR 1985-86 A.I.D.P. STUDENTS
BY SCHOOL (NUMBERS OF STUDENTS)

TABLE A-1

Outcomes For 1985-86 A.I.D.P. Students by School
(Numbers of Students)

School	Still Enrolled	Graduates	Dropouts	Discharged	Status Unknown	Total N
Boys and Girls	95	2	59	10	0	166
Bronx Regional	40	8	31	11	0	90
Curtis	78	2	36	4	0	120
Evander Childs	61	12	80	10	0	163
Franklin K. Lane	52	2	63	6	0	123
George Washington	67	8	102	15	0	192
George Wingate	66	9	28	18	1	122
James Monroe	49	3	74	8	0	134
John F. Kennedy	72	2	78	29	0	181
Martin L. King, Jr.	68	1	61	9	0	139
Park West	55	10	50	9	0	124
Sarah J. Hale	91	7	63	15	0	176
Walton	76	4	67	20	0	167
Washington Irving	51	4	69	12	0	136
William C. Bryant	63	5	87	22	0	177
Adlai Stevenson	87	7	57	10	2	163
Andrew Jackson	81	2	45	16	0	144
Christopher Columbus	58	22	82	9	0	171
Julia Richman	84	8	60	7	0	159
Lower East Side H.S.	29	11	15	4	0	59
Morris	70	2	42	28	0	142
Seward Park	53	5	54	24	0	136
DeWitt Clinton	182	25	331	46	1	585
Erasmus Hall	146	73	251	41	2	513
Erasmus GED	3	16	17	0	0	36
Lafayette	142	33	122	42	0	339

APPENDIX B

PERCENTAGE OUTCOMES FOR 1985-86 A.I.D.P.
STUDENTS BY SCHOOL

TABLE B-1

Percentage Outcomes for 1985-86 A.I.D.P.
Students by School

School	Still Enrolled	Graduates	Dropouts	Discharged	Status Unknown[a]	Total N
Boys and Girls	57.2%	1.2%	35.5%	6.0%	0%	166
Bronx Regional	44.4%	8.9%	34.4%	12.2%	0%	90
Curtis	65.0%	1.7%	30.0%	3.3%	0%	120
Evander Childs	37.4%	7.4%	49.1%	6.1%	0%	163
Franklin K. Lane	42.3%	1.6%	51.2%	4.9%	0%	123
George Washington	34.9%	4.2%	53.1%	7.8%	0%	192
George Wingate	54.1%	7.4%	23.0%	14.8%	.8%	122
James Monroe	36.6%	2.2%	55.2%	6.0%	0%	134
John F. Kennedy	39.8%	1.1%	43.1%	16.0%	0%	181
Martin L. King, Jr.	48.9%	.7%	43.9%	6.5%	0%	139
Park West	44.4%	8.1%	40.3%	7.3%	0%	124
Sarah J. Hale	51.7%	4.0%	35.8%	8.5%	0%	176
Walton	45.5%	2.4%	40.1%	12.0%	0%	167
Washington Irving	37.5%	2.9%	50.7%	8.8%	0%	136
William C. Bryant	35.6%	2.8%	49.2%	12.4%	0%	177
Adlai Stevenson	53.4%	4.3%	35.0%	6.1%	1.2%	163
Andrew Jackson	56.3%	1.4%	31.3%	11.1%	0%	144
Julia Richman	52.8%	5.0%	37.7%	4.4%	0%	159
Christopher Columbus	33.9%	12.9%	48.0%	5.3%	0%	171
Lower East Side H.S.	49.2%	18.6%	25.4%	6.8%	0%	59
Morris	49.3%	1.4%	29.6%	19.7%	0%	142
Seward Park	39.0%	3.7%	39.7%	17.6%	0%	136
DeWitt Clinton	31.1%	4.3%	56.6%	7.9%	.2%	585
Erasmus Hall	28.5%	14.2%	48.9%	8.0%	.4%	513
Erasmus GED	8.3%	44.4%	47.2%	0%	0%	36
Lafayette	41.9%	9.7%	36.0%	12.4%	0%	339

[a] The percentage of students by school falling into the unknown status is less than the aggregate percentage (4.3 percent) reported in the text because most students classified as unknown were also missing school information and could not be included here.